

Life 5/30/69

THE MOB

For sheer candor, a hidden microphone can't be beat. Law breakers and law enforcers know this better than anyone else. At one time or another during a six-year period beginning in 1959, federal agents had a microphone planted somewhere amid the tomato paste and olive oil cans in a back room of the Armory Lounge restaurant in Forest Park, Ill., headquarters of Momo (also known as Moe, Sam, Mooney) Giancana, Boss of the Chicago Mob. They had another bug at a Michigan Avenue tailor shop which served as a meeting place for major Chicago hoodlums. There were two more bugs in a mortgage firm and a mercantile company, where a Giancana lieutenant named Felix (Philly) Alderisio had a piece of the action.

Logs of conversations picked up by these microphones were restricted to use as background intelligence only and have remained deep in government files, with access to them tightly controlled. They performed a highly useful function. In 1959, for example, four years before Joe Valachi turned government informant, the tailor shop bug recorded Moe Giancana and his Mob Boss predecessor, Tony Accardo, reciting a roll call of the Mafia's High Commission, a lineup which until that time had been purely a matter of speculation among enforcement officers. To the anguish of the gangsters, other information contained in the logs is now beginning to bubble to the surface, as an ironic result of the efforts of one of their own to stay out of prison.

Philly Alderisio—at least until recently—has always been known as a gangster's gangster—a swaggerer, but an organization man. In 1963, however, he was sentenced to 4½ years in prison for trying to shake down a Denver oil promoter. (He had ap-

proached the man with this introduction: "I'm Phil Alderisio. I'm here to kill you.") Philly isn't one of the major intellects of the Chicago Mob, but he was smart enough and rich enough to hire a topnotch defense attorney, Edward Bennett Williams.

To date, Williams has done well by Alderisio. The mobster has served no time on the extortion conviction, as a result of appeals based on Williams' effort to show that the government's evidence was tainted by illegal electronic surveillance. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Alderisio and his counsel are entitled to examine the government's eavesdropping files where Alderisio was a participant, and on May 5, the Justice Department delivered to Williams partial transcripts of conversations logged on four FBI bugs in Philly's Chicago haunts. This makes a lot of people, by no means all of them gangsters, very nervous about the possibility of disclosure in open court of what the government overheard in the Armory and other places. (Among the other places, it is known for example that a federal bug was located for a considerable stretch of time smack across the street from City Hall in the First Ward Democratic Headquarters, which functions as a link between the Mob and Mayor Daley's political machine and police force.)

Philly Alderisio may not have thought up this maneuver for staying out of prison, and in the end he may be no happier with it than some of his rough-riding buddies are. In any event, the contents of the government logs which have been shaken loose as a result of his tactic present as direct and startling a picture of Mob life as has yet been seen—gammy, gossipy, authentic, and in some cases terrifying. Excerpts appear on the following pages.



FELIX ALDERISIO

'Meet me
at the
Armory ...



MOMO GIANCANA



... and let's talk about it'

CONTINUED 43

THE MOB

NOTE: In the following conversations, indicates that an obscenity has been omitted.

TIME: Oct. 10, 1961

PLACE: Armory Lounge

CAST: Moe Giancana; John Formosa, Giancana's Nevada courier. SUBJECT: A Nevada gambling casino and its principal owner at the time, Frank Sinatra.

FORMOSA—Sam, I think you gotta start . . . giving them orders: "This is it, Frank," and that's how you got to start. Aren't you going to be tied up with Cal-Neva?

GIANCANA—Who gives a about Cal-Neva? him. Don't worry about it. And I'm gonna wind up with half of the joint with no money.

FORMOSA—... He was real nice to me. ... I had a chance to quiz him. I said: "Frankie, can I ask one question?" He says: "Johnny, I took Sam's [Giancana's] name, and wrote it down, and told Bobby Kennedy: 'This is my buddy, this is what I want you to know, Bob.'" Between you and I, Frank saw Joe Kennedy three different times—Joe Kennedy, the father.

What, if anything, Frank told the late Robert F. Kennedy, then U.S. Attorney General, or his father, bore little fruit for Giancana. Kennedy put his name on the top of the list of Justice Department targets in Chicago.

GIANCANA—In other words . . . if I even get a speeding ticket, none of those would know me.

FORMOSA—You told that right, buddy. And I'm for you 100%, for that. ... He [Frank] says he's got an idea that you're mad at him. I says: "That, I wouldn't know."

GIANCANA—He must have a guilty conscience. I never said nothing. . . .

FORMOSA—He [Frank] says he wrote your name down.

GIANCANA—Well, one minute he tells me this and then he tells me that. ... One minute he says he talked to Robert and the next minute he says he hasn't talked to him. So, he never did talk to him. It's a lot of Why lie to me? I haven't got that coming.

FORMOSA—I can imagine . . . tsk, tsk, tsk . . . If he can't deliver, I want him to tell me: "John, the load's too heavy."

GIANCANA—That's all right, at least then you know how to work.

You won't let your guard down then, know what I mean?

FORMOSA—Why don't you talk to him?

GIANCANA—When he says he's gonna do a guy a little favor, I don't give a how long it takes. He's got to give you a little favor.

A long silence, then the talk turned briefly to Giancana's exasperation over the intensive government surveillance on him.

GIANCANA—I got more on my than any other in the country! Believe me when I tell you.

FORMOSA—I know it, Sam.

GIANCANA—I was on the road with that broad. There must have been, up there, at least 20 guys. They were next door, upstairs, downstairs, surrounded, all the way around. Get in a car somebody picks you up, I lose that tall, boom, I get picked up someplace else.

Four or five cars, with intercoms, back and forth, back and forth.

FORMOSA—This was in Europe, right?

GIANCANA—Right here, in Russia—Chicago, New York, Phoenix.

The talk wanders to other areas, then returns to the affairs of the two entertainers, and the difficulties in booking one of them into a Giancana-favored nightclub.

FORMOSA—Dean and Frank, they made a deal, you know, it's a club now, or something.

GIANCANA—Yeah, I know. Them You see Dean, you tell him I want ten days out of him.

FORMOSA—Ten days!

GIANCANA—In other words, you get two weekends in.

FORMOSA—What if he says he's booked?

GIANCANA—Find out when he ain't booked.

FORMOSA—I'll tell him this is a must, right? Tell him you said it. Tell him: "Hey, Dean, this is a must. Sam wants you for ten days."

GIANCANA—Don't make a special trip. Call him.

FORMOSA—That prima donna. You can't call him. I gotta go there and lay the law down to him. So he knows I mean business.

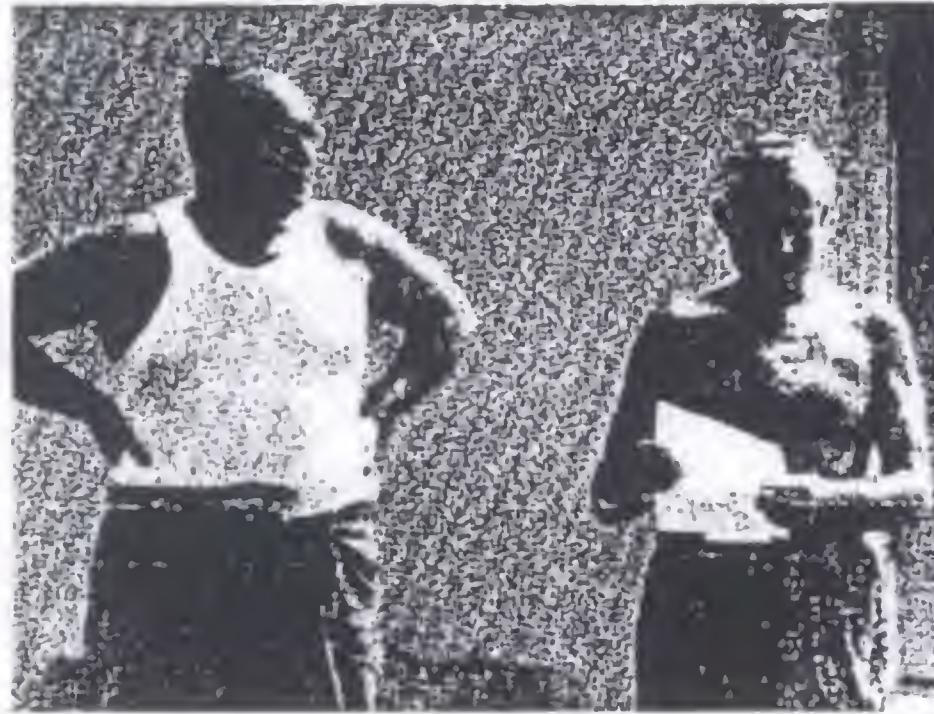
GIANCANA—It seems like they don't believe us. Well, we'll give them a little headache, you know? ... All I do is send two guys there and just tell them what they're workin' at. ... Bang, you crack them and that's it. Just lay them up. If he ever hit the guy, you'll break his jaw. Then he can't sing.

TIME: Oct. 11, 1961

PLACE: Armory Lounge

CAST: Giancana; Bernie Glickman, boxing manager.

SUBJECT: The management of Charles (Sonny) Liston, the boxer, which involves Tony Accardo (here referred to by his nickname "Joe Batters").



of income tax fraud. On Jan. 5, 1962 a U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals would grant him a new trial, and he would be acquitted. Chicago's First Ward contains Giancana's political machinery. Here he can pull levers in both the Democratic and Republican parties. The Republican ward committeeman is Peter J. Granata. The Democratic committeeman is John D'Arco. Until Giancana ordered him to get out of the city council, D'Arco was the First Ward alderman. Vito Marzullo is an alderman from the West Side 25th Ward.

PETE—I got a call the other night, last night . . . Joe B's [Joe Batters, nickname of Tony Accardo] . . .

GIANCANA—Don't worry about Joe B's . . .

PETE—One of the judges said: "Heavy water coming from the north. . . ." There's only one Republican out of this three. . . . I've got three. . . . I think we ought to get a hold of D'Arco, Marzullo, and we'll talk to—[a judge].

GIANCANA—I'll tell you, Pete, you call me and I'll work on it personal. I'll come down to D'Arco.

PETE—Let D'Arco get a hold of Judge ----, he's a Democrat.

GIANCANA—And then what? What do you expect him to do?

PETE—Tell him, what the hell. See, we got those guys [naming two other judges] . . . they said all right. But who the hell gets it, see? I'll get a report on it in a day or two.

GIANCANA—I'll take a couple of weeks. Tell D'Arco to get a hold of judge ----.

PETE—Yeah, and I got another guy talking to----[the judge].

TIME: Evening of Dec. 7, 1961

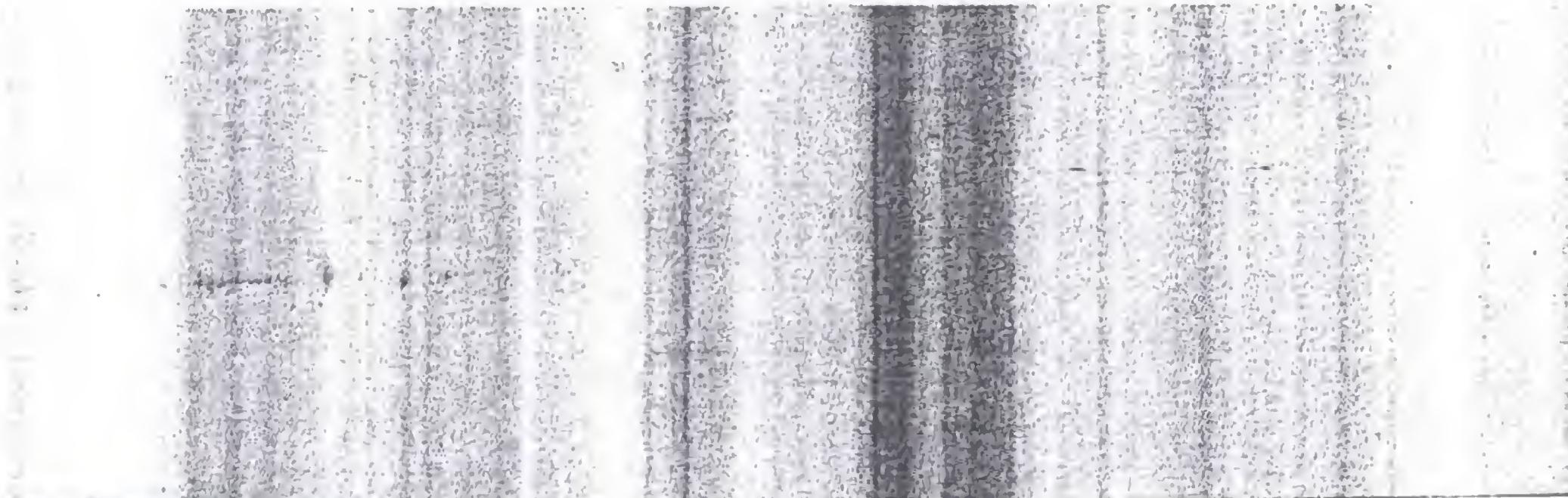
PLACE: Armory Lounge

CAST: Giancana; Lou Brady, a Florida hustler.

SUBJECT: The cancellation of a murder contract the gang issued for Brady. To avoid the killers, Brady had fled to Texas. Now he has emerged from hiding and is trying to convince Giancana that he had not made off with that \$90,000 from the sale of the Florida home of another Chicago gangster, Paul DeLucia. Brady hopes to return to Florida without being killed if Giancana can be induced to put in a good word for him with the Florida branch of Cosa Nostra.

BRADY—I took and went to Texas . . . like a hermit, like the middle of Siberia, where you got





Picture at far left shows unbuckled Alderman John D'Arco and Chicago union boss Frank Esposito taking the sun in Hollywood, Fla., at the time they were being stalked

went to the place all dressed up. The squads [police] and the cars are all around. I'm right there. And everybody is talking and I say: "Oh, that's terrible. But them ---- niggers, they're always fighting one another, you know."

Cerone always boasted that few people outside The Mob knew he was a triggerman.

CERONE—I wasn't known for a long time. I kept away. I wasn't seen with nobody, never mixed. I was always hidden, for many years.

Cerone chuckled about that. Then another killing crossed his mind.

CERONE—I remember one time we was on this guy for a week. You know, you get close and you blow it and then you try again. So this one night, we pull up on the guy and he's with his wife. So he [Cerone's partner in the crime] said: "What the ----, I'll get him." So I grabbed the wheel and he jumped out and chased the ---- a half a block, but he nailed him. Remember that time you popped that guy and you rolled him over a couple of times and he lived?

YARAS—I didn't do that. . . . Oh, yeah, now I remember. I did that with Johnny. I'm gonna tell you a funny story. You know, I think that ---- tried to hit me the same time I hit him. I swear. Because he put a shot right through the windshield.

It was Buccieri's turn, then, to reminisce about a victim he called Polecat.

BUCCIERI—I remember we had to hit him in the belly, then we had to burn him. We couldn't even get the handcuffs on him.

Cerone put a question to Yaras. **CERONE**—All these ---- years, Davie, why didn't you move in on some of these ---- guys down here [in Miami]?

YARAS—First of all, down here they got the lights on [law enforcement pressure and publicity]. You hate to be connected. But these New York ---- in Miami . . . I'll tell you something. You think we got some bad guys? These [New York] guys are real ----. They want to knock their heads around. You don't like to be with them.

CERONE—If I was down here all these years, Davie, I would have moved into those guys.

YARAS—Yeah, but with some of these guys, you couldn't do nothing with them. You should see some of these guys. They won't even let nobody else on the track. You'd have to hit them.

CERONE—Have to hit them all. ▲

to send away to get a ---- pound of macaroni. Sam, all you got to do is make a phone call. Just make one call and say: "You know that fella [Brady], he's with me."

GIANCANA—I don't make telephone calls.

BRADY—All right, write a note, put it in an envelope, seal it and give it to me. I'll deliver it.

GIANCANA—That's all right. I'm going down there [to Miami] in a month anyway.

BRADY—What's the matter, Sam? You wouldn't write a note for me to carry!

GIANCANA—What the hell. All I have to do is go there.

No word has been heard from Brady in recent years. He was last reported seen headed out to sea on a boat with Florida Cosa Nostra Boss Santo Trafficante.

TIME: Feb. 11, 1962
PLACE: A Miami cottage rented by John (Jackie) Cerone, a sidekick of Accardo and an Alderisio associate.

CAST: Jackie Cerone; Davie Yaras, Miami chargé d'affaires for the Chicago gang; Fifi (Flore) Buccieri, leader of Giancana's assassination squads; and Jimmy Torello, one of Buccieri's killers.

SUBJECT: The proposed kidnaping and killing of Chicago Union boss Frank Esposito. He is being stalked but has been inconveniently spending most of his time basking with John D'Arco. The killers have no love for D'Arco but he presents logistic problems.

CERONE—They . . . lay there and watch, but that ---- [Esposito] never left his ---- porch. All he would do all day long is walk to the ---- front and then walk to the back. He walked three or four miles every day, but that ---- never left his porch.

YARAS—I wish ---- we were hitting him [Esposito] now, right now. We could have hit him the other night. We went to prowl the house . . . there was just Philly and he.

CERONE—Yeah, that would have been a perfect spot to rub him out.

. . . Well, if we don't score by the end of the week . . . then we got to take a broad and invite him here.

YARAS—Leave it to us. As soon as he walks in the ---- door, boom! We'll hit him with an ---- ax or something. He won't get away from us.

BUCCIERI— . . . Now if he [Esposito] comes with D'Arco . . . we do everybody a favor. We would do everybody a favor if this ---- D'Arco went [was killed] with him [Esposito].

CERONE—The only thing, he [D'Arco] weighs 300 ---- pounds.

(Later, same conversation)

CERONE—Get the boat tomorrow.

YARAS—I'll get the boat and everything else.

CERONE—We'll get him on the boat if he takes a walk—then it's nothing for me to call him.

YARAS—Yeah, then you can say: "Hey, Frank, what are you doing here?" You know what I figured we could do? Early in the morning we could go there in bathing suits. When we got him in the car, we don't have to do nothing to him in the car.

CERONE—All right. Here's what we do. Monday, we work. We start. Skippe [Frank Cerone, a kinsman of Jackie's] and Davie [Yaras] will work on it. Next morning we go out there and we do it all over again. Even I can go out there one morning. We can take turns. The guy must take a ride. Maybe he won't do it in a week, maybe the 10th or 11th day, he might take a ride alone. We can pull our car right alongside . . . we can all step in . . . even if it's daytime. One guy grabs the wheel, throws him in, let him holler.

BUCCIERI—Well, we got that knife and he's got to move, with us jabbing him with that knife.

CERONE—We'll put him on the floor and away we go. We can ride around with him. Before we do it, we'll get him ----. . . .

BUCCIERI—Well, we got him ---- after we get him in. We'll drive slow.

CERONE—Yeah, we can drive around and then we can find a prairie. We can have everything with us, the ax and everything.

BUCCIERI—We can't let any blood show. We got to keep the guy alive until we're in a good, safe spot.

CERONE—Oh, no, you can't touch the guy until we get to the car.

BUCCIERI—Yeah, we keep him alive until we're ready.

CERONE—Yeah, you can't afford to have a man dead on your hands. I got the contract [the murder assignment]. Did you know that?

BUCCIERI—Yeah.

Esposito's life was spared when the FBI notified Florida authorities of the murder plan. As they sat around Cerone's living room, the gangsters talked of other jobs. In other times, chatty and giggly as schoolgirls, Cerone recalled his attempt to murder Jim (Big Jim) Martin, a policy betting king, a job botched because Cerone was using outdated ammunition.

CERONE—So when I banged the guy, I called him with a full load . . . but it had to go through a Cadillac. I blasted him twice. Joe [Accardo] says: "Is the guy dead?"

And I said: "Sure, because when I nailed him, his head went like that, you know!" The next morning, the headlines are in the paper. The guy is still living . . . this double o [double-o buckshot, a shotgun load] was 10 years old . . . it wasn't fresh, so the guy lived.

YARAS—That's one thing, when I use that double o, I got to use fresh ones [shells].

CERONE—The guy [Martin] was a big nigger. He left the country and went to Mexico. That's what we wanted anyway. We wound up with all his policy [lottery] games. The next day, I'm on the corner [where Martin was shot]. I